

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Site Name: Shop and Office

Project File No: 1121

Address: 121 Ryrie Street Geelong 3220

Approx. Date: 1888

Integrity: Moderate

Significance Level: C(Local)

Photograph No: 03.12

Survey Date: March 2002



History

This site at 121 Ryrie Street, Geelong, is located on part of Crown Allotment no.16, Section 35, of the Geelong Town Plan of 1858. D. Hoyle was the original owner of the land.

On 3 August 1888, the Geelong architect Joseph Watts called tenders for the erection of a 2 storey brick shop at this location for John Wadelton, a chemist. Wadelton was already living on the site in a smaller 3-roomed pharmacy known as Robert McDonald's New Drug Hall. He had occupied the earlier premises from 1879 and bought it in 1880 from Alexander McDonald, for whom it had been built in 1854. The new shop was designed with a verandah and had four rooms. Its address before 1900 was 143 Ryrie Street. Wadelton occupied the premises for approximately 30 years, until it was purchased by Thomas Andrew Dickson of Garden Street in 1918, by which time it was readdressed as 121 Ryrie Street. Dickson immediately carried out extensive work on the building. It may have been then that the shop was given its distinctive arched roofed verandah that project towards the street and was supported by cast iron columns with decorative capital (for it was not evident in earlier photographs). From this time the shop was known as "Dickson's Pharmacy". Although he owned the shop for about 10 years, Dickson occupied it only briefly, leasing it between 1920 and 1925 to William Gough. When Dickson moved

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to South Australia before 1930, he rented the building to Cole and Whittaker. In the 1930s the pharmacy was bought by Mary Barbara Aimee Bews and Mabel Florian Shearer Herd, householders, of 35 Bell Parade, West Geelong, and 400 Latrobe Terrace. Lance Whittaker's tenancy continued until the early 1940s, when another chemist, Gavin Hartley Williams, took over the lease that was possibly succeeded by his son, B.F. Williams, in the 1960s and 1970s.

Joseph Watts was born in 1816 at Peterborough, Northampton, England. His father is said to also have been an architect. Watts arrived in Victoria on the Duke of Richmond in 1853, classing himself as a bricklayer. He is first mentioned as an architect in 1865 and with the partnership of Watts and Jackson between 1881 and 1883, he was a most successful architect in Geelong throughout the 1870s and 1880s.

Description

The shop and office, 121 Ryrie Street, Geelong, forms half of a larger building situated in amongst other commercial buildings in the street.

The two storey, rendered brick, Victorian Free commercial styled building is characterised by a two bayed composition defined by three early Corinthian pilasters on the first floor. The building also has an early projecting rectangular parapet that is supported by early decorative paired consoles above the pilasters, and projecting rectangular brackets above the consoles. There is also an early projecting moulded stringcourse that defines the first floor level that is punctuated by square brackets. The first floor also has two early timber framed double hung windows with early rendered sills and moulded rendered architraves, an early early "Dickson's Pharmacy" sign above the windows and a crowning balustraded parapet with terminal piers surmounted by early orbs. There is also another sign that forms part of the other sign that reads "AND" and "Photo Store" between and under the windows respectively.

The shop and office at 121 Ryrie Street has an introduced cantilevering verandah over the shopfront. This shopfront has been altered, although the form of the existing shopfront with flanking metal framed and glazed windows and a central double ingo with timber and glazed doors is possibly early.

Behind the parapet is a hipped roof form clad in recent galvanised corrugated steel. It is separated from the neighbouring hipped roof by an early projecting unpainted brick party wall. The rear is also constructed of unpainted brick, with early window openings and a series of one and two storey hipped and gabled additions clad in galvanised corrugated steel.

Statement of Cultural Significance

The shop and office, 121 Ryrie Street, Geelong, has significance as part of a larger building that represents a reasonably intact example of a Victorian Free commercial style. Built in 1888 for John Wadelton, chemist, to a design by the Geelong architect Joseph Watts, the building is a legacy of the commercial developments in Geelong in the second half of the 19th century. The site had a long history as the location for chemists, having been Robert McDonald's New Drug Hall from 1854 and the later building serving as Dickson's Pharmacy from 1918 until the 1970s. The building appears to be in fair condition when viewed from the street, with some evidence of deterioration about the windows and parapet.

The shop and office, 121 Ryrie Street is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. Although altered, it still demonstrates original design qualities of an intact Victorian Free commercial style. These qualities include the two bayed composition defined by three

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Corinthian pilasters on the first floor, projecting rectangular parapet supported by decorative paired consoles above the pilasters and projecting rectangular brackets, crowning balustraded parapet with terminal piers surmounted by orbs, and the projecting moulded stringcourse that defines the first floor level and which is punctuated by square brackets. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the two storey height, rendered brick wall construction, two timber framed double hung first floor windows with rendered sills and moulded rendered architraves, signage that reads "Dickson's Pharmacy and Photo Store", rear unpainted brick wall construction and the rear window openings. The architectural significance of this shop and office also relies on the retention and conservation of the neighbouring shop and office at 119 Ryrie Street.

The shop and office, 121 Ryrie Street, is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with commercial developments in Geelong in the second half of the 19th century. In particular, this building has associations with John Wadelton, chemist and original owner from 1888, who commissioned the Geelong architect Joseph Watts to design a new building to replace Robert McDonald's New Drug Store that had been constructed in 1854. Watts also designed the neighbouring building at 119 Ryrie Street, which was built simultaneously to this building. The new building had a long history as a chemist, being known for many years as Dickson's Pharmacy from 1918 and serving several chemists until 1970.

Overall, the shop and office at 121 Ryrie Street is of LOCAL significance.

References

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